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HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY

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By

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CONTENTS

PREFACE.

Introduction: As To Jesus.

PART I.—CHRISTIANITY, MAN and JESUS.

Introduction.

I. Believers in Jesus.

II. From Pagan to Christian Trinitarianism.

III. Platonism to Council Theology.

PART II.—FOXE'S BOOK OF MARTYRS.

Introduction.

I. The Martyrs and the Six Articles.

II. The Historic Setting.

APPENDIX.

John Ball.

PREFACE

In December, 1907, I published my pamphlet, HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY. On the title page, the purpose of the pamphlet was described, in my then unfortunate style, as follows:—

> "Being an enquiry into the ethical and economic basis of the Christian Ecclesia, and a consideration of the persecution and principle mongering-tendencies which have marked the rise and spread as well as the decay of the Religion of the Nazarene, with special reference to the absurdities of 'Christian Socialism' and the philosophic materialism of revolutionary class-war communism."

The entire pamphlet has been re-written. I have omitted the 1907 preface, which explained the growth of the pamphlet. That, and such of the text as is not reproduced, may be published later as an appendix.

G.A.A.

GLASGOW, C.3., March 8, 1939.

P.S. (Erratum)—The typed manuscript of this pamphlet, everywhere, deliberately employed the small letter when referring to Jesus as "he," "him," or "man." The printer, following the custom of the trade, substituted the capital "H" or "M" throughout, contrary to my principle. The manuscript correction would mean vast re-setting. Will the reader please ignore the capital letter and note that the lower-case is intended. The capital letter pronoun is contrary to democracy and common sense. It is opposed to the teaching of Jesus himself.

March 25, 1939. G.A.A.

HISTORICAL AND TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY

INTRODUCTION: AS TO JESUS.

Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical Institutes, is most careful to distinguish between those who spread the Christian name and those who spread the Christian teaching. It is doubtful whether Mosheim appreciated the real distinction between these two aspects of Christianity, just as it is uncertain to what extent Mosheim really understood the importance of his own work. Written in a dead language for the information of the so-called learned, its real value became evident when it was translated into the language of the people and so made accessible to all. Even now the tremendous value of Mosheim's review of the early centuries of Christian development is not appreciated, and the general evangel of Christianity remains a travesty of the teaching which Jesus hoped would be the beginning of a new social era. The grand tragedy of the Christian religion was not the failure of the pagan world to understand Jesus but the inability of the Christian Church to appreciate its trust. The pagan world did understand Jesus, for it murdered Him. The Christian Church has never understood Jesus, for it has wasted centuries deifying Him.

The process of deification, and the subsequent process of anti-deification of Jesus of Nazareth, sums up the history and the tradition of Christian thought. Incidentally, this process of thought corruption conceals the struggle for dictatorship and power over men's minds and bodies alike that the clerical successors to Caesar's Empire engaged in under cover of the Christian name. Certainly, from burning their opponents to resting content with a pious declamation of them as infidels, represents a growth in civilization. But it is an evolution in secular courtesy and not in Christian teaching, and therefore cannot be recorded to the credit of the Christian Church. Yet Christians are still so incapable of making a sober study of their Church's history, that they insist, in the words of a famous New York divine, that: "Christianity has been the spring

of innumerable changes in society, and has for centuries proved the greatest ethical force that has ever operated upon the history of nations, regenerating bad men and furnishing new ideals to good men, consecrating infancy, purifying youth, chastening maturity, and lending mellowness and beauty to old age."

These words of the Reverend William Dwight Hillis are hardly original even in form, and they are certainly not true in fact. If Doctor Hillis had written in a different tense, it might have been possible to have endorsed his remarks. If he had said that Christianity should have been the spring and should have proved the greatest ethical force and should have furnished new ideals one could have agreed with the statement. If he had said that it was the aim of Jesus that His teachings should produce all the marvellous results that Dr. Hillis claims, then again it would have been possible to have endorsed the claim made by Doctor Hillis. But stated as a claim on behalf of Christianity as it exists and has existed down the ages, stated as a claim on behalf of the Christian Churches and Sects, the statement has no foundation at all in fact.

For reasons of political compromise, and from fear of the consequences of bold simplicity of propaganda, the first Christians and their pseudo-Christian converts, even before the time of Constantine, corrupted the Christian teaching into a contribution to theology, whereas Jesus meant it as a contribution to sociology. That error made possible the deification of Jesus and so paralysed the mind of man with the development of priestcraft and with the perpetuation of the idea of the divine right of leadership, which is so closely associated with the other idea of the divine right of kings.

The first six centuries of Christianity was a period of struggle of doctrine instead of one of struggle for life. Instead of the masses surging forth to be emancipated, they were used as the tools of rival factions for power. Instead of the preaching of the word resulting in freedom of speech for all mankind, it hardened into the divine authority of this or that apostle, then this or that presbyter, and then priest, and finally pope. Instead of being concerned with the import of the words of Jesus the people were made to concern themselves with the person and not even the personality of Jesus. The son of man, the unemployed carpenter of Nazareth, who had died as a malefactor, in death assumed a purple robe, became a rival to Caesar's authority and finally his master. Whereas the living Jesus had sought to free men's minds, the ghost of the dead Christ merely palsied men's souls. The result was and is Christian theology, and all that 18th Century metaphysics about a god being necessary to make the world and the strange use of a materialistic maxim in defence of an idealistic conception that something cannot come out of nothing.

The great divines of the Christian Church did not understand that if something cannot come out of nothing, materialism must be true, for matter must be eternal. The case for God as a creator of the world is that he succeeded in producing something out of nothing. Strangely enough, this argument against Deism and Atheism of the closing century of Christian controversy takes us right back to the first centuries of Christianity, when men believed as Mosheim so well records, that the Creator of the world was the architect of evil and that God was the enemy of the Creator and the changer of the world. The full import of this belief has never been understood by the Christian Church, for it makes clear the fact that Jesus was not a theologian and not a believer in Creators and, therefore, had nothing whatever in common with the Deity of the Christian Church and its 18th Century apologists.

Jesus was an agitator, a poet, and a philosopher, and his god was the god of freedom and of progress the word, clothed in rags, but doing battle against the sword and authority robed in purple. The real history of Christianity has been the struggle of this invisible force that inspired Jesus seeking to reveal itself down the Christian centuries in a struggle against the power of priest, presbyter, and finally the divine authority of the Bible itself.

Christianity established expresses itself as an organised error in its final fear in the struggle against free thought. The Church is afraid that if one denies the Divinity of Christ, one abolishes the ethic of Christianity. Historical fact is too much for the mind of the theologian. He does not realise that the great work of Jesus as a teacher can never be appreciated until he is deprived of his borrowed robes and stands forth before men, not a Deity but a man, a very simple man, a man without authority, a man with no authority except that of the truth which inspired him. It is only when the centuries restore Jesus to His birthright of manhood, that mankind will be able to pay tribute to the real grandeur of his character. Historical and traditional Christianity has been a conspiracy, not merely against the well-being of mankind, but against the character and worth of Jesus.

The student finds it so easy to understand how the deification of Jesus arose that he cannot realise why the absurdity of that deification should have prevailed so long. Christianity arose among a conquered people, the Jews, and had the originality to cast aside all traditions of nationalism. To fight for liberty and to repudiate nationalism was indeed an unique contribution to human thought. Christianity developed in a world of paganism and heathenism and it was inevitable that the first Gentile Christians should be more pagan than Christian. As Macaulay says, Christianity conquered paganism but paganism infected Christianity. The infection has

been miscalled Christianity. It has in deed spread through the ages like a plague. Christianity not only arose as the creed of internationalism; it was also the gospel of the poor. But this strange new idea of internationalism and the rights of the poor could not escape the circumstances of its origin.

We all know the first discussions among the Jewish Christians as to how far they were justified in repudiating the law of Moses. Christianity repudiated Moses for the Jews and Caesar for the Gentiles. But when the leader died, those who believed in his gospel were chided by their opponents for believing in a dead leader. In the phraseology of the day, they were accused of believing in a dead god who had died as a malefactor on the cross. They accepted the challenge and declared that their dead god was more powerful than the living Caesar, than Augustus with all his army and opulence. Without the exercise of the superstitious fancies that were then so rife, it requires no great imagination to understand that it was but a step from believing in the influence of a dead god to transforming that god into a resurrected deity. Other factors developed the resurrection idea. It fitted in with the conquest of paganism and an adaptation of the Christian ideas to the needs and beliefs of paganism. But it had its origin in the idea of battle, actually in the idea of the class struggle, at a time when the old Roman republic, with its plebian institutions of tribunes and its less democratic consul, had merged its democratic rights in the power of one leader, the upstart Julius Caesar, forerunner of Augustus. Under the successor of Augustus, Constantine, the Christian religion took shape as a definite theology and a definite system of worship. But it was no longer opposed to imperialism. It was the embodiment of power, militarism and empire. When Christian ministers refer to the great work for good accomplished by the Christian religion, they refer to this monstrous institution erected by Constantine on the ruins of the old pagan empire and also upon the total negation of all Christian principles.

The modern Christian is afraid to repudiate this structure erected by Constantine, even when he seeks to reform it. There is not a single section of the Christian Church that possesses sufficient faith, and likewise sufficient good sense, to make an end of this semi-pagan church. The Unitarian hangs on to some shade of Christ divinity and also retains a vague idea of the priesthood. The Quaker repudiating the priesthood, hesitates between Trinitarianism and Unitarianism and in any event objects to Jesus possessing completely unadulterated manhood. These are the last phases of Christian thought, its most advanced expression and nearest approach to rationalism. With all Christians, even the most progressive and the most rationalistic, the fear seems to be that if one thinks the truth about Jesus, if one meets him in the ordinary garb

of humanity and does not receive him when he is all dressed up in heavenly raiment, his authority as a teacher will suffer and his reputation will become worthless. If this is correct, it still does not justify the deification of Jesus. But the strange fact is, this conception is absolutely false. Jesus does not suffer from being known for what He is, a mere man. He has suffered from being paraded for what He is not, a god.

As the deification of Jesus developed, the purpose of the Christian message changed. From being a challenge to the world of Caesarism and militarism, an outrage and an abomination in the eyes of property society, a simple ethic of individual conduct and character, Christianity became a plaything of emperors, a system of worship, and therefore a form of service and ceremonial that was deadening to the soul of man. All theology implies worship and all theology is, therefore, opposed to the original teaching of Jesus of Nazareth. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He objects; and although He does repeat to them an old Jewish prayer, full of beauty and simple directness, He accompanies the form with a rationalistic suggestion that there is no need for prayer and with the very honest warning that they should not pray in public to be heard of men unless they wished to be known as hypocrites and to be accused of emulating those who worshipped the oracles of Caesar. This was not merely an accurate description of the pagan world in which Jesus lived. It is a correct account of the Christian world of to-day.

The original purpose of Christianity was not to institute a system of worship but to transform a world of war and exploitation into a world of peace and security for all. The propagation of this message constitutes the biography of Jesus; and since the message was proclaimed with great simplicity and directness at a period when people believed in all kinds of wonders and portents, the record of this propaganda really immortalises the fame and memory of the Man who died for its promotion. There can be no higher tribute paid to the name of Jesus than to recall what He actually attempted. All the titles in the world are not greater than the worth of the man who receives them. The worth of Jesus is far higher than the worth of the honours that are paid to Him. The word god is merely a salute of wonder and an expression of subjection. The title is quite an unworthy one to pay to Jesus who wished all men to be free and believed that all men were equal. All the other titles are merely words of praise and adulation and but superlatives of ignorance. Jesus is called God by persons who do not understand, in their smug complacency, what it means to be a man. The adoration becomes banal but it serves the mischievous purpose of making the name of Jesus offensive to every thinker by substituting worship for the courage and action of life.

In class society there is no time for worship. Hunger does not permit one the luxury of wonder. Those who live in class society need to emancipate themselves from the thraldom of property and the paganism of power. They have literally to fight for a new heaven and a new earth, that is, a new conception of life, and its embodiment in a new social order. The message of Jesus is not a call to worship but the call to struggle. He came not to bring peace but a sword, the sword of social warfare and of mental combat. He actually said to the society in which He lived: "Your system is wrong. My purpose is to destroy it." Instead of realizing this purpose of the man whom they called Master and divine, Christians throughout the ages have done their best to perpetuate the system that was wrong, and to destroy those who sought to change it. Men have approached nearer to the teachings of Jesus in proportion as those, who were regarded as the orthodox Christians, of the time persecuted them for heresy.

Part I.—Christianity, Man and Jesus.

INTRODUCTION.

It is the custom to define Christianity as Trinitarianism and to proceed to explain that this Trinitarianism has been the spring of innumerable changes in society, and has for centuries proved the greatest ethical force that ever has operated upon the history of nations.

There are three objections to be urged against this custom:—

(1) Trinitarian Christianity did not begin with Jesus and was not established until the fourth century of the Christian era.

(2) The Christian centuries, if they are Christian, since that period, have been centuries of slavery, exploitation and murder. If this Trinitarian Christianity has regenerated bad men, furnished new ideals to good men, consecrated infancy, purified youth, chastened maturity, and lent mellowness to old age, it must have achieved all these excellent consequences in the most complete secrecy.

(3) Owing to the peculiar doctrines of Trinitarianism, Christianity has been identified by the Trinitarians themselves with the specific violation of human rights, irrespective of any considerations of sex or age.

This essay does not deny that Jesus taught the brotherhood of man. It denies the existence of the brotherhood of man as a moving principle of current Christian society and of the Christian Church since the time of Constantine.

One has only to live in a Christian city or to study the history of modern civilization, or plunge into an analysis of booze dividends to realise that in mass the inhabitants of modern Christendom, whether in infancy, youth, maturity or age, are in no way better than the inhabitants of ancient pagan civilization. Allowance must be made for progress in the arts, crafts, and sciences, and especially in mechanical conveniences. All this, however, has nothing to do with the Christian claim, which is made on behalf of a fundamental inward or spiritual culture. Machinery is superior to the primitive tool; but brotherhood is the first principle of human association and can be practised as well under primitive conditions as under the most advanced industrial ones.

Every habit was once a novelty. The time comes when it is hard to believe that the custom arose in time or that the habit

constituted a departure. This is the difficulty of those to whom custom and habit mean piety and repute. Hence the inability of the orthodox Christian to understand that there was a world of men and women living together in society, subject to and in revolt against institutions, with gods and priests, ideals of life and the universe, vices and virtues, seeking solutions to their moral and economic problems, dwelling in cities ages before Christianity arose. Indeed, they went their way and never suspected that there ever would arise a religion known as Christianity. They never dreamt that their own faith would go down in name, if not in fact, before this teaching of which they had never heard. They no more thought the time would come when Christianity would be the most aggressive of world religions than the modern Christian thinks that there was a time when his creed was but the faith of an insignificant minority of slaves denied all civic and property rights. Time exonerates completely the ignorance of our pagan ancestors. It was not their function to know the future any more than it is our's to define the faith of centuries to come. The Christian apologist can offer no such excuse. It is his business to know how the custom of paganism declined and how the habit of Christianity arose. He must explain the why and the wherefore, not only in point of time but also from need of reason. He must explain why the pagan gods died and why men and women turned to Christianity. He must explain when and where Christianity became Trinitarian Christianity. It was not always so. It had a beginning. When? Why?

I.—BELIEVERS IN JESUS.

It may be that Christianity started with Jesus. St. Augustine, probably the greatest of all the Fathers, did not think so. He said very wisely:—

> "That which is called a Christian Religion existed among the Ancients and never did not exist from the planting of the Human Race until Christ came in the flesh, at which time the true Religion, *which already subsisted*, began to be called Christianity."

It is certain that Jesus never taught Trinitarian Christianity. The doctrine he preached, was simple and direct: there is only one God, the Father. He is the Father of Gentile and Jew alike, the living Father of all mankind who is served in faith and works. There is one brotherhood, outwith all question of sex or race or creed, the living brotherhood of all mankind. This simple Theism which is more concerned with man's relationship to man as a first principle of all human existence, is the only teaching of the Old Testament prophets and of Jesus. The latter and His disciples give no indication of ever having heard of the doctrine of the Trinity. Historic theology traces the numerous accretions to the

teachings of Jesus. It dates the unforgivable corruptions and explains their evolution. It shows beyond all doubt that the doctrine of the Trinity was not accepted until the Council at Constantinople, A.D. 381.

Whilst the doctrine was evolving, people believed, naturally, in Jesus the man. Whereas He taught an ethic of service and even of action, the Christian sects began to quarrel as to their opinion of His worth and integrity. They concerned themselves overmuch with His status. There was nothing very wonderful about His name. Jesus was a common name among the Jews. Josephus, in his Antiquities, mentions eleven persons named Jesus. They were:—

Jesus, the Son of Phabet.
Jesus, the Son of Sapphias.
Jesus, the Son of Anias.
Jesus, the Son of Gamahiel.
Jesus, the Son of Damineus.
Jesus, the Son of Thefuthus.
Jesus, the Son of Joseock.
Jesus, the Son of Saphet, an old-time gangster.
Jesus, the eldest priest after Ananus.
Jesus or Joshua, who succeeded Moses.

History is concerned with only Jesus, who was none of these: Jesus the Son of Man. He was held to be a humble and crucified prophet, possessed of no visible glory, but much invisible power, by the following sects and heresiarchs who flourished whilst the Church Militant was developing its absurd trinitarian creeds:—

(1) The Nazarenes.
(2) The Ebionites.
(3) Heracleon.
(4) Cerinthus.
(5) Basilides.
(6) Carpocrates and his son, Epiphanes.
(7) Antitacti.
(8) The Adamites.
(9) Valentius.
(10) The Ophitae, or Serpent Worshippers.

Heracleon, who flourished about A.D. 123, and repudiated the testimony of martyrdom, insisted that death for one's opinions was no evidence of the truth of those opinions.

Cerinthus lived towards the close of the First Century. He studied at Alexandria but resided mostly at Ephesus. Jesus, he said, knew nothing of His high destiny till it was revealed to Him in His consecration to the Messiahship. Then it was He attained to the sonship of God. The sufferings of Jesus were incidental to His existence but no part of His work of redemption. Those sufferings

could not redeem others. "Right" or "Truth" could not suffer and must triumph over its enemies.

This emphasises the distinction that Cerinthus, Carpocrates, and the Ebionites draw between Jesus and the Christ-principle or Word made manifest in the flesh. Though it seems mystical to us to-day, it is a sound philosophical conception. It means the rejection of hero-worship. One can be grateful to Marx or Bakunin for throwing light on human development and still decline to be dwarfed by the personality of either. Voltaire's protest against the constant looking back to Jesus belongs to this order of distinction.

Basilides, who lived during the early Second Century believed in much of the superstitious mysticism of his time. His views of Jesus were rational enough. He taught that divine understanding came to Jesus at his consecration, but did not depart from man or die with Jesus on the cross. Understanding gave birth to the Word. From the Word sprang Thought or Prudence. From Prudence came Wisdom or Power. From Power, Creation and Dominion. He taught metempsychosis and transmigration, thus showing the stupid errors that a thinker and a heretic can embrace.

Carpocrates and his famous son, Epiphanes, flourished during the Second Century. They dwelt on the pure understanding of Jesus, and held that by it He conquered the Creator (or material principle) and attained to the supreme unity beyond the power of the spirit of the world. They held that things were not good or evil in themselves, but only by repute of men. They liked elegance and good living and had Epicurean tastes.

Antitacti and the Adamites, were two different sects and were disciples of Carpocrates. They lived during the Third Century. The Adamites repudiated prayer, worship and all religious ordinances as evil in the sight of the Supreme Radiance, that is, the God of Jesus or Progress, because it was inspired by the Creator or false God of the Jews.

Valentius lived during the middle half of the Second Century, and held that Jesus suffered and that the Christ-principle did not. Jesus was a spiritual man, born to eternal life. His message was to the merely psychic among men to win them to spiritual existence. He had no message to material man. There was no resurrection from the dead. The Holy Ghost was only a divine attribute.

Valentius subscribed to many mystical conceptions now out of date. He taught that there were three kinds of substances, (1) The Material, symbolised by Cain; (2) The Animal or Physical, the ruler of the world, possessed by Abel; (3) The Spiritual, proceeding from the True God, and revealing truth moving towards struggle. This was symbolised by Seth. Men embodied one or other of these principles in their lives. Jesus embodied the third principle.

II.—FROM PAGAN TO CHRISTIAN TRINITARIANISM.

The history of the Trinitarian conception may be divided into two epochs: (1) before the time of Jesus; (2) from the time of the apostles to the time of the Council at Constantinople. Trinities were believed in by the Egyptians, the Hindoos, and the Assyrians before the time of Jesus. It may be very hard to understand the need for Trinitarian conceptions to-day; yet there is an explanation for their origin. Our pagan ancestors felt a real urge and Trinitarianism arose in response to their need to picture the universe more accurately. Pagan Trinitarianism was a logical necessity, surging out of circumstance. At this stage the Trinity represented an approach to the Unitarian conception of the universe, the passing from mythology to pure Theism. Trinitarianism is to mythology and primitive nature worship what Mahomet's polygamous teaching was to the practices of the people among whom he lived. He did not teach Polygamy. He found polygamy existed and he restricted it. Similarly, Pagan Trinitarianism did not promote Polytheism. It found Polytheism in existence, the universe was literally peopled with gods in every nook and corner, and Pagan Trinitarianism reduced them to three and made the three a Unity. It represented genuine progress and the negation of superstition. Christian Trinitarianism, on the other hand, arose out of a teaching that was pure Theism. The teaching of Jesus and the Apostles was strictly humanitarian, rational and unitarian. Jesus was a stern Monotheist with a wide humanitarian vision. There are traces of wonder, worship and idolatory in the references of the Apostles. To them Jesus was wonderful and had to be explained. The desire to explain Him promoted those corruptions that destroyed His word and magnified the tributes to His person. On the other hand, the Apostles possessed a practical conception of human freedom, happiness, equity and wellbeing on earth. Athanasius, who was the father of Trinitarian Christianity, admitted that Jesus and His Apostles taught the humanity, and not the divinity of Jesus. It follows that the difference between Pagan Trinitarianism and Christian Trinitarianism is the difference between progress and retrogression. To explain the first is to understand and appreciate it and to note the real beauty of its unfolding idealism. To understand the second is to repudiate it as a fallacy and a corruption.

Trinities represent the combining stages of mythology. Natural phenomena and human passions had been personified. Every element of nature and every emotion that moves man had been referred to a special deity. Trinitarianism de-personifies this conception of the world and substitutes a belief in natural powers. It teaches that they are the expression of one underlying natural principle or deity. This is Pagan Trinitarianism in its highest and least

corrupt expression. It is not a unity of gods. It is a unity of the attributes of being in one deity. In a less philosophical expression, Pagan Trinitarianism limits the personification of the elements to three principles and combines these into a partnership of deities.

Pagan Trinities date back to B.C. 800. The Hindoo mythology made a Trinity of Fire, the Firmament, and the Sun. They were asserted to be the form of the One God. This was nature worship and arose from agricultural pursuits. At a later period, this nature worship gave place to priestcraft. Professional prayer called Brahm, was introduced, and the priest or mediator or prayer-bearer —the Brahman—was established. Praise and simple prayer, in its turn, gave way to sacrifice; and the idea of prayer was personified, till God was called Brahma. He became the central figure of a new Trinity composed of the Creative Power, the Preserving Power, and the Transforming Power. At first, but poetical personifications of the power of nature, these deities became more and more personified until at last they were viewed as distinct persons without relation to any function they were supposed to discharge in nature. They became abstract, absolute, distinct, futile, and purely parasitic. They degenerated from a language of explaining nature to the central elements in a ritual of superstition.

In 2 Kings, XVIII., Sargon is referred to as Shalmaneser. In the place erected by this monarch at Khorsabad were the well-known Bulls of the Assyrians. Each Bull represented the Assyrian Trinity, and possessed:—

(a) The Human Head, typifying Wisdom.
(b) The Bull's Body, typifying Power; and
(c) The Eagle's Wings, meaning Omnipresence.

This is a Trinity of Attributes: a poetic conception of nature.

The Egyptian priests held that everything perfect has three parts. The being of man was divided into the animal, the intellectual, and the spiritual by them. The Egyptian God, Horus, was a Trinity. The famous Sphinx is a Trinity and consists of:—

(a) Man, typifying Intelligence;
(b) Ox, typifying Fruitfulness; and
(c) Lion, typifying Strength.

Then there is the well-known ornamental Trinity embodying the three principles of the Hindoo Trinity, with the difference, that the transforming power is termed the destroying power. This is the famous combination of Globe, Wings and Serpent. Each Egyptian city had its own Trinity. Ammon or Amen was a Trinity. Osiris, Isis, and Horus represent the Trinity that has been made famous by popularising the names of the first two members. In these triads, the third proceeded from the two proceeding it, and was of inferior rank. One Egyptian Trinity, however, was addressed as: "Hail! Trimorphous God."

Sir J. G. Wilkinson dealt very thoroughly with these Triads or Trinities in his "Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians," Second Series, Volume 1. Canon Trevor, in a small work published by the Religious Tract Society on "Ancient Egypt," mentions these Triads and confesses that he is unable to explain them. The only difficulty for a Christian Trinitarian is that to explain them, he must undermine his own superstition.

That famous scholar, J. G. Fraser, in his chapters on the "Dying God," Part 3 of "The Golden Bough," Chapter 1, includes notes on "The Morality of the Gods." Herein he collects authorities on the subject of the Trinity. The Egyptian Deities were arranged in Trinities of Father, Mother and Son. The younger God was supposed to possess all the attributes and powers of his Father. The Mother was the feminine counterpart of his Father, a local Goddess or consort. To the extent that this Trinity influenced Christian thought the Holy Ghost would be conceived of first as a Divine Mother. This conception would be practically impossible to those who knew Jesus as the son of Mary, a married woman with a family, dwelling with her husband in Nazareth of Galilee. Yet if the Jews had believed in the Trinity, this is the only conception they could have entertained; for the Jews conceived of the Holy Spirit as feminine. It was the Greek philosophy that held the Holy Spirit to be masculine. Hence the Christian Trinity with its attendant stories of the Virgin Birth and the Immaculate Conception is dated by this fact alone as an invention of ecclesiastical interest. The Church could not have conceived of Jesus's father being the Holy Spirit until after its embracement of Greek philosophy. The logical consequences of this Christian Trinitarian conception and strange corruption of Pagan Trinitarianism is absurd. Actually, it gives Jesus three fathers; one earthly and legal father, Joseph, the husband of Mary; and two heavenly fathers, the Holy Ghost, who is not God the Father, and God the Father, who is not the Holy Ghost. This banality raised the suspicion of which anti-theological writers freely availed themselves, that Jesus was an illegitimate child. This would be of no consequence were it true. The truth is, however, that there is no reason to suppose that a godly father was invented to explain an unknown earthly one. On the contrary, absurdity of absurdities, the suggestion of an illegal earthly birth has been invented to explain the story of the divine birth which was invented several generations after the death of Jesus with a view to uniting the Pagan and Christian congregations. As late as the Third Century of the Christian era the idea that the Holy Ghost was a Divine Mother and not a masculine spirit prevailed. This idea completely destroys the conception of Christian Trinitarianism.

The famous Origen, who flourished in the Third Century A.D., quotes from the Apocryphal "Gospel to the Hebrews," the passage

in which Jesus says: "My Mother, the Holy Spirit, took me a moment ago by one of my hairs and carried me away to the great Mount Tabor."

In the reign of Trajan, a certain Alcibiades, from Apamia in Syria, appeared at Rome with a volume in which the Holy Ghost was described as a stalwart female about ninety-six miles high and broad in proportion.

The Ophitae or Serpent Worshippers were, in part, disciples of Valentius. They held that the Holy Spirit was "the first woman," "Mother of all living," who was beloved by "the first man" and likewise by the "second man" and who conceived by one of them "the light which they called Christ."

This sect kept serpents and worshipped them. They held that the serpent that tempted Adam and Eve was the Christ-principle, the Spirit of Wisdom. They worshipped stars and believed in two Gods: the Creator or God of the World, and the Supreme Radiance or God of Progress.

Although we speak of Christendom and call ourselves Christian, the early Christian mythology and conception of the universe has undergone a complete transformation. It is hard for the modern Christian to understand the moving idea of the Christians of the First to the Third Centuries. Their God was the Supreme Radiance or Self-Existent Father. The Creator was an angel of the lower Heaven opposed to the Supreme Radiance. The God of Judaism, probably for political reasons, because Phariseeism upheld Caesarism, they identified with the God of Paganism. Hence their philosophy was one of progress. Their God was a God of Change. He changed the world but did not make it. This is intelligible mysticism and made the prophet or agitator the incarnation of the Christ-principle or Divine Understanding. It is in direct contradiction to the creed of the modern Church, which abolished the Supreme Radiance and proclaimed the established God of the World, of the lower Heaven of power, the object of Christian worship. It despoils the Christian records and pretends that its strange creed of worldly darkness is historic and traditional Christianity.

III.—PLATONISM TO COUNCIL THEOLOGY.

The transformation from the Egyptian feminine Holy Spirit to the masculine third person of the Christian Trinity was due to Platonism. Plato was the famous disciple of Socrates and his greatest biographer. He flourished the Fourth Century before Jesus. After the martyrdom of Socrates, Plato went into exile and

travelled to Egypt for the good of his health. He had derived from Socrates the doctrine of two powers governing the universe. In reality, he personified one power and made the second an attribute or expression of that power. Although really monotheistic, in expression his doctrines seemed to be dualistic. Thus he believed in: (a) The Self-Existing God; i.e. God as existing to Himself, or the absolute power of the universe; (b) The Intellect or Word emanating from God; i.e. God acting outside of Himself or manifesting Himself in the universe or in the mind of man. This is the beginning of the teaching of the Logos or the Word of God manifest in the flesh, so familiar to Christian thought. After his Egyptian association, Plato adopted a Trinitarian conception of God. He defined God as: (a) First Cause; (b) The Reason or Logos; (c) The Soul or Spirit of the Universe. These mystical abstractions of Plato were personified definitely by his disciples. They united these ideas into a combination of three gods brought together in a mysterious and ineffable generation. Platonism, thus degenerated, became in due course a fundamental Christian teaching. Gibbon, in Chapter XXI. of his immortal "Decline and Fall," refers, with unanswerable sarcasm to "the divine sanction" which Christianity "bestowed on the fundamental principle of the theology of Plato." The historian describes how the "learned proselytes of the Second and Third Centuries" were encouraged to admire and study the writings of Plato, because he had "Marvellously anticipated one of the most surprising discoveries of the Christian revelation." "Discoveries" is the correct word.

After the conquests of Alexander the Great, the system of Plato was established at Alexandria. Here it influenced the Alexandrian Jews, who produced the apocryphal "Wisdom of Solomon," written in Greek about B.C. 150. Herein we find the Trinity of God, Word and Wisdom correctly stated: "IX.I. God made all things by His Word and ordained man by Wisdom." These Septuagint translations of the Old Testament was for the use of the Alexandrian Jews. It rendered the Hebrew "Dabar" (Word) "Logos." Philo, who lived just before and during the early portion of the First Century of the Christian era applied the Platonic meaning to "Word." Since the Platonists had crystallised the "Logos" into a separate personality, he corrupted the Jewish Monotheism into a plural Theism. Mostly he spoke of two Gods: the Self-existing or Supreme God; and his "Word" or "Logos," then styled for the first time, a separate being, which created the world. According to Philo, man was formed in the image of the "Logos" and not of the Supreme God. Sometimes his mysticism implied a vague belief in three deities and he would define God as a Trinity and a Unity. The speculations of this Alexandrian Jew deeply influenced the course of Christian theology. It diverted the stream of Christian thought from the development of ethical principle into scholastic speculation

on the nature of the deity. It reduced the Christian teaching from a utility to a futility.

The Trinitarian corruption of Christianity continued naturally until it brings us at last to the period of the Church Councils and authoritative theology. It is interesting to note that this theology by Council decree was synonymous with the rise to political power of the Christian Church. From this time on the Church identifies itself with Pagan society and the economic institution of slavery, with mild occasional ineffectual protest, mere shadowy reflections of the first Christian ethic. It is the beginning of the great ethical heresy of Christianity arraying itself in all the pomp and ceremony of orthodox power and doctrine. The steps towards this great Trinitarian corruption and negation of Christianity were as follows:—

(1) *The Gnostics.* — The Gnostic corruption of Christianity occurred in the time of the Apostles. Their views were a mixture of Egyptian superstition, Platonism, Judaism, Hindooism, and the Persian theory of good and evil. From the Gnostics, Christianity developed its idea of matter being evil in itself. The language of the Gnostic sects is no longer used and it is better to translate their thoughts into modern language. One of these sects was called the Seemers. From them the modern Freethinker derives his idea that Jesus was a myth. They held that an aeon, called Christ, assumed the shape of man, and became Jesus. He was not real flesh and blood and suffered in appearance only. This doctrine shows the absurdity of transforming the living man Jesus into an impossible being called God. The Apostle John combats this theory and insists that Jesus was real flesh. It is possible that this strong reply to the error of the Gnostics, co-operating with Pagan superstitions, was responsible for the other Christian superstition of drinking the blood and eating the flesh of Jesus. Corruption begets corruption and confusion. The Christian message is denied because of this ridiculous Pagan desire to glorify and magnify Jesus out of all likeness to himself. The one good thing that came out of this Gnostic superstition was Paul's insistence on the slogan "And Him Crucified." This is at once a challenge to the theological corruptions and also to conventional, exploitative society. It ranks with Jesus's own splendid declaration about the son of man who had not where to lay his head. It shocks us back to first principles.

The Gnostic theory that Jesus was a phantom was promoted by Menander, First Century; Saturnius, Second Century; Manes, Third Century; and by Cerdon and Marcion, his disciple. Marcion and Cerdon denied the resurrection of the body and the inspiration of the Old Testament. They believed in the Supreme Radiance that was opposed to the Creator.

Manes was martyred for his opinions by the Persian Monarch in A.D. 272, after a weary imprisonment, for corrupting the National Religion. He was intended for the Magi (Persian Priesthood) but travelled through the East Indies and China to study all the theologies, and developed an Eclectic philosophy. On his return, after being received at first with favour, he was declared a heretic and as he would not retract, he was flayed alive, and his skin stuffed and hung up before the gates of the town of Djondischapur in order to intimidate his followers. Faustus was his chief disciple. Manes taught that there were two great governing principles, the Kingdom of Light under the dominion of God (Ormuzd) and the Kingdom of Darkness under the dominion of the Daemon of Hyle (Ahriman) and that these have a succession of dualisms generated from them. All things were affected by the combination or repulsion of the good and bad. Man had a double soul, a good one from the Good Principle, and an evil one from the Evil Principle. Their bodies were also supposed to be formed, the upper half by God, the lower by the Daemon of Hyle. The Old Testament was referred to as an inspiration of the Evil Principle, the New to that of the Good. The Daemon having misled man by false religions (Judaism and Paganism), Christ descended from the Sun in a seeming body to help the souls of light to the worship of the true God; but His instructions not being understood by the Apostles, and their followers, He promised to send another Apostle. Manes was that Apostle. He built up a mystical system of sun-worship and considered soul and sin both substance. He denied freewill and celebrated Sunday as the day of the Sun. He believed in the transmigration of souls and taught a mystical trinity. The Father or Radiance resided in the abyss of Light; Christ dwelt in the Sun, by power; and in the Moon by Wisdom; and the Holy Spirit resided in the air. His disciples celebrated his day of death as the festival of the "Chair of the Teacher."

John considered the mythical theory of the Gnostics to be the theory of Anti-Christ. Paul was repudiated by many of the early Christians as a Pagan because of his insistence on the idea of obedience and authority. His respect for law and order notwithstanding, he maintained powerfully that Jesus was executed as a malefactor. Since that time, many of the best followers of Jesus have followed in the Master's footsteps. Where He stirred up all Jewry, they have stirred up what is termed Christendom. Not least among these was William Penn, perhaps the most distinguished and most cultured of the Quakers. The imprisonments and career of Penn seem to have been forgotten by my Quaker friends of to-day in their anxiety for Government rank in Labour and National Governments. They condemn me for not being respectful enough in my struggle against the present world of cant, miscalled society. Had they been contemporary with either Jesus or Penn they would

have condemned the originality that inspired each. What hypocrisy runs riot in the name of discipleship and piety!

The Gnostic idea made much headway in the Second Century and was responsible for a further corruption of the Christian teaching. In reply to the growth of this mythical idea, the real Christian propagandists exalted increasingly the personality of the human Jesus. They developed the idea of the "Logos" and insisted that in addition to His human nature He was possessed by the "Word." In one sense this idea is perfectly true and is applicable to every genuine prophet, reformer or revolutionary. It is quite right to say that the pioneer or even the great orator is possessed by an idea or "Word" and to distinguish between his genius at such moments of expression and the man himself in his normal human reaction. There is no doubt, for example, that Robert Burns was possessed by the "Word." Unfortunately, this idea was promoted in superstitious times and prepared the way for the intolerable superstition of the "double nature," i.e., the two inconsistent elements of deity and humanity. It was but a step from this special conception of the "Logos" to the promotion of the miraculous conception. From a sense of petty bourgeoise shame the malefactor Jesus got lost more and more in Christ the Son of God.

Justin Martyr contributed not a little to this development. He was a Greek by birth and a Platonist, i.e., a Trinitarian heathen philosopher, before he became a Christian. He certainly spread Christianity and defended it. But he adapted it, naturally enough, to his own conception. He was not satisfied to believe in a Jesus possessed merely by the "Word." He made his "Logos" flesh in Christ. Rightly enough he deemed the "Logos" eternal, and Christ, meaning Jesus, mortal. He did not realise that the "Logos" to be eternal must be purely spiritual, the pervading power of an idea or influence. It could not be eternal flesh. Justin speaks of the inferiority of Jesus to God, but calls Him, because of the "Logos," that became flesh in Jesus, "The Next in Rank after God." Justin has no knowledge of the Holy Spirit as a separate deity but rightly uses the phrase to describe the influence and growth of truth. The trouble with mysticism is that, unless clearly understood and defined, it cripples rather than serves the cause of thought. It is a kind of confused metaphor developed into a system of philosophy. Its purpose is really that of a crutch but in the course of time it turns into a bludgeon. This is what has happened to the idea of the "Word manifest in the Flesh" and also with that of the Holy Spirit. Justin identified the "Logos" with the Supreme God and later with that of the Holy Spirit. Actually, he believed in a dual rather than a triune deity. The Nicene Fathers would have condemned him for heresy, but he certainly furthered the superstition they imposed on the Christian world as authoritative theology.

Theophilus, a Greek convert to Christianity, who belonged to the same Second Century as Justin, but who wrote a little later, carried the corruption of Christianity a stage further. He was the first Christian to use the word Trinity, but he was also a convinced Monotheist or Unitarian. His Trinity was one of Attributes and not of Persons. It consisted of God and His two manifestations which he termed "His Logos and His Wisdom." He declared: "The true God alone is to be worshipped." Nevertheless, he made the Trinity a Christian doctrine and it was a further stage forward in the direction of Trinitarianism.

It was inevitable that the attempts to estimate the value of Jesus and His message, to place and to worship Him and His "Word" and to consider His greatness in relation to that word, should lead to mysticism. The Christians were not entirely responsible for the corruption of their teaching. Nor did the Pagan converts actually mean to corrupt. The corruption arose out of circumstance and was in part due to the very challenge that Jesus and His immediate disciples made to the Pagan world. The Roman Emperor was regarded as a Son of God. Jesus claimed to be, in contra-distinction, the Son of Man. Indeed, the idea of the "Son of Man" was a distinct Jewish idea and occurs in "The Book of Enoch." This work was current among the Hebrews before 130 B.C., and the text was quoted in works attributed to the early Christian Fathers, e.g., Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen. The latter assigned to it an equal degree of inspiration to that which he assigned to the Psalms. It was translated into English by Archbishop Laurence and the first edition appeared in 1821. Doctor Richard Laurence, the translator, was born at Bath in 1760 and became Professor of Hebrew at Oxford in 1814, and Archbishop of Cashel in 1833. The last edition of his translation was published five years later and he died the same year. The book which he translated purported to be a series of revelations, made both in Heaven and in Earth, to Enoch, "The seventh from Adam." According to scholars the MSS. included many interpolations, but it is admitted that the original of Laurence's translation is the same work as that to which the early Fathers referred. The purport of the book is to anticipate the teachings of Jesus. It declares that the meek and the poor shall possess light, joy and peace, and shall inherit the earth. It affirms that there is a fixed gulf between the rich and the poor and that their souls are separated by a chasm. It anticipates the coming of a Son of Man whose teaching it forecasts. It must be confessed that this promised prophet bears a close resemblance to Jesus of Nazareth. Some Freethinkers have seized on this book to assist the theory that Jesus was a myth. To my mind it destroys neither the fact of His existence nor yet the originality of His teaching. It merely proves that the idea of freedom and revolution were smouldering

in Jewish thought and waiting an opportunity to burst forth into a white flame of enthusiasm and revelation leading to revolution.

Jesus claimed to be the Son of Man. His teaching challenged Caesar and Augustus. It was but a step for the Christians to claim that He was as much the Son of God as any Emperor. This argument was actually advanced, and after the execution of Jesus the Pagan controversionalists actually referred to Him sneeringly as the dead or mortal God. It must be remembered also that the Pagan conception of God was very different from the Christian one. With all its refinements and corruptions, the Christian conception is distinctly the later immediately-pre-Christian Jewish one. Back of the Trinitarian theology is a vague idea of God as an invisible essence. The Pagan conception was quite different. God was not nearly so holy or mysterious. He was less philosophic and invisible. He was the leader incarnate, the military leader for choice. He was much more a human giant than an invisible being. Every person possessed of ability was regarded as a God and the Pagan Pantheon, with its many niches for different Gods is less superstitious and more understandable than the modern Christian imagines. Our Pagan ancestors defined God differently from us. That is all. Jesus himself, unwittingly aided this superstition when he opposed rightly the unarmed word to the deified sword. He raised the word to Heaven and made it God. His disciples made Him, since He was a messenger, the embodied word. This led, not merely to mysticism, and to deification, after the manner of the Pagans, but, owing to the grafting of the Pagan idea of the Deity on to the Jewish conception, to the controversy about "the Generation of the Son." The doctrine of a God having other Gods as relatives was a favourite Pagan idea. Zeus was a son of Chronos, and Ares and Apollo were two of his sons and Athena was one of his daughters. The Pagan idea was that God could beget progeny. The Christian idea is that God is Spirit and rules out such an absurd suggestion.

Irenaeus belongs to the same century as Justin and Theophilus. He is a little later than the latter. He was a Greek of Asia Minor and hesitates to dogmatise about "the Generation of the Son." He maintained the supremacy of God the Father and defined the "Logos" or "Word" as the immanence of God. This immanence dwelt in Jesus, who was distinct from God and suffered from God and suffered on the Cross in His whole nature.

Tertullian, the Latin Father, who hailed from Carthage, brings us to the end of the Second Century. He declared that the word had existed from eternity with the Father as an attribute. This attribute became the Son in time. This is the doctrine of the pre-existence. Superstition had not yet asserted the Co-Eternity of the Father and Son. Tertullian went a long way in that direction for

he applied the idea of animal generation to the deity in place of the hitherto mystical conception of the metaphysical procession. Tertullian brings us down from the realm of pure idealism, however tortuous, to that of the banal superstition. He declared that Jesus was the Son of God in His nature, because He was born or begotten of God. He was charged with teaching a plurality of Gods and replied by declaring that the Father is the Monarch or single source of being and the Son was His subordinate included in the Father's sovereignty.

As with the Gnostics so with Tertullian. He developed a new angle of superstitious approach. This inspired correction among another sect of Christians. They promptly plunged into a contrary superstition. We are indebted to Tertullian, among others, for our knowledge of their teaching. Fraxas was the leader of this school. He was a disciple of Theodotus, his contemporary. They partly returned to the teachings of the sect of Seemers. Tertullian assumed that Jesus was God and also declared that there was a higher God, the Father. Clearly, this is the doctrine of two Gods. Praxas was shocked and distressed at this doctrine. Tertullian also wrote of "Persons" in depicting the manifestations of deity. Praxas was further shocked by this doctrine. He clung, however, to the deity of Jesus but insisted that there was only one God. To reconcile these seemingly contradictory items of his creed, Praxas declared that the Father and Jesus were the same person and that the Father Himself suffered on the Cross. This doctrine preserved the idea of the unity of God and was known as the Patri-passion. The Father was Wisdom, or the Word or Reason, hidden and contemplated in the Universe. Jesus was Speech or Sermo, the revelation of the Father or the Supreme Radiance in words spoken and works accomplished.

Praxas had a powerful disciple in Artemon or Artemas, who lived in Rome.

Tertullian has left three creeds. In substance, they are not unlike the so-called Apostles' Creed. They assert the omnipotence of God and style Him the Maker of the World; the resurrection of Jesus and His ascent into Heaven; the resurrection of the flesh; and the virginity of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The rising church, growing by adaption to the surrounding Paganism, seeking power by magnifying the name of Jesus, had travelled a long way from the simple ethical teaching of Jesus, a Man who had not where to lay His head and who rebuked the admirer who blessed the womb that bore Him. Clement of Alexandria, a Greek Father and Hippolytus, another Greek Father, Bishop of Porto, near Rome, belonged to the Third Century. Their views are those of Tertullian. Clement uses the word Trinity once, to denote the bond of Christian graces, Faith, Hope and Charity. He attaches no

theological meaning to the term. Hippolytus was less happy in his use of the word. He defines the Trinity as three Gods or principles, but not a co-equal three. The second and third members of his Trinity are subordinate to the first. He allows personality to the Father and the Son but most decidedly ascribes none to the Holy Spirit. To him, the Holy Spirit was an immanence and not a ghost.

Titus Flavius Alexandrinus Clement (A.S. 192-217) was born at Athens and educated at Alexandria. He suceeded Pantoenus as master of the Catechetical school at Alexandria and had Origen for a pupil. He fled from Egypt to escape the persecution of Severus and drew up a discourse to prove the lawfulness of flying in times of persecution. He went to Jerusalem and to Antioch and then returned to Alexandria. Clement gave Jesus four bodies and believed in the Last Supper: —

(1) His Natural Body.
(2) His Symbolical Body; Holy Communion, present in memory.
(3) His Spiritual Body; or Message.
(4) His Mystical Body; the Church; or Organ of Propaganda.

Origen was contemporary with Clement and Hippolytus. He belonged to the same race and city as Clement but was born of Christian and not Pagan parentage. His writings suffer from the mysticism and fanciable interpretation of his time. He endeavoured, however, to free Christianity from much of this corruption and to understand the original teaching of Christianity. He was a powerful opponent of the Trinitarian doctrines that were then developing in the Church. Against the Patri-passians he quotes Jesus's own statement, "The Father who sent Me is greater than I." His teaching, despite its mysticism, is very nearly as pure as that of Jesus himself. It was condemned, however, by the Councils held at Constantinople in A.D. 553 and 688. Origen had turned to dust by that time and had joined Jesus, not in Heaven but in the shades. Had it been necessary for their orthodox purposes of power, these Councils would have condemned even Jesus himself.

Contemporary with Origen was Ammoninus Saccas. He was an Alexandrian by birth and a sack-carrier or porter by occupation. He founded the Eclectic Philosophy, and maintained that the rising Christianity of his time was a corruption of Platonism, and that all sects and religions were part of one great systematic scheme of philosophy and superstition. He proclaimed the idea of the unresting Godhead. An endless series of worlds had proceeded the present world. An endless series would follow it. God was eternal change. Origen was much influenced by this teaching and developed

the system of allegorising the Scriptures. He held that every passage contained three meanings: (1) the literal or historical; (2) the moral; (3) the mystical. The last, under the dress of the visible or earthly, revealed truths of the invisible or spiritual world. This is the doctrine that Swedenborg taught to a much more cynical age as the theory of correspondence.

The next development in Christian thought was the teaching of Sabellius, who belonged to the second half of the Third Century, and came from Ptolemais in Egypt. He reconciled the deity of Christ with the unity of God by anticipating the doctrine of Swedenborg and its followers of the New Church of our time. This doctrine teaches that God exists in one person but in three relations: (a) in Creation and giving the Law; (b) in the person of Jesus, during His abode on earth; and (c) in the elevating influence called the Holy Spirit. These were God's three methods of revealing Himself. The power of God "possessed' Jesus during life. It was transient and not permanent. The "possession" did not exist before the incarnation of Jesus nor after His death, but returned again to God. Granted the existence of God and the idea that He manifests His existence in the world, that all humanity lives and moves and has its being in Him, and that He expresses Himself in the struggle for truth and freedom, this teaching of Sabellius is fundamentally true. Even when we reject its mysticism and its theology and deny the existence of God, we must still recognise its simplicity and grandeur and its fundamental ethical truths. Poetically considered, this doctrine supplies a useful working hypothesis for the cause of progress.

Sabellius expressed his conception in the terms of Sun-Worship. His triune deity was defined as follows: God the Sun was the Law and Father of the Universe. He issued forth a beam, His Son, and Radiance became incarnate in the Son. But the beam returned to Him, whereupon, He diffused beams throughout the world. This diffusance was the continuance of radiance among men or the Holy Spirit.

This view of Sabellius was challenged by Arius, the celebrated Fourth Century Presbyter of Alexandria, who brought the entire question of Trinitarianism to a critical issue. Arius was driven into exile and took refuge in Syria where his opinions spread. They made headway in Northern Africa. He was joined by Eusibius of Nicomedia. From this fact, the Arians are often called Eusibians. Arius declared that the Son, meaning Jesus, was produced out of nothing and was the first of created beings, God having created Him before the World, the Sun, the Moon, etc. Consequently, the Son was created before time, but not from eternity. His most controversial assertion was that Jesus or the Son was made of a similar but not of the same substance as the Father.

The great dispute between him and Athanasius was on this very point of the same or similar substance.

The immediate difference was very trivial. It was like a fork in the road. One stands at the crossway or at the apex of the triangle and the two branch roads meet. At that point of contact and for a little way along either roads it makes no difference which path one takes. Let two persons set out, however, from that given point and let one pursue the one path and one the other. What happens? Each step widens the difference between them. They are pursuing paths that never meet. Thus it was with Arius and Athanasius. The latter did not subscribe to all the absurdities of the subsequent authoritative theology, with which his name has been associated. He was not so superstitious as the later church, however much one may be opposed to the absurdities of his mysticism. Arius was not so rational as the later Unitarians. Nor was he so completely free from superstition as one would imagine. In many respects his theology was less rational and less coherent than the very intelligent system of Sabellius. His system, however, contained a small germ that was not to be found in that of Sabellius even, and of which there was no suspicion in that of Athanasius. That germ was that of the essential distinction in substance between Jesus and God. It meant the retreat from the divinity to the humanity of Jesus. At the end of one road was the Church Militant maintaining Pagan doctrine and upholding a world of Pagan Imperialism. It uses the name of Jesus as a charm but pays no heed to His ethical teaching. At the end of the other road is the Commune struggling, the common people in their poverty uniting in their mighty brotherhood, acclaiming the humanity of Jesus, and upholding His ethical teaching. The Church, its theology established, its interests entrenched in parasitism, is challenged by the people seeking to realise the Christian message in reality, demanding that the tree of righteousness shall yield the fruit of commonweal, and transforming the revelation of Jesus into the revolution of the world. This was the purpose of the Word which is only made manifest in the flesh when happiness comes to every man, woman and child on earth.

Part II.—Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

Very few people read Foxe's Book of Martyr's. Foxe's extreme bitterness against the papacy tends to make him unreadable in these days of tolerance and strange rational acceptance of superstition. Foxe's hatred is understandable. He was the personal friend of many of the martyrs. William Page, who was compelled to do penance at the time of the burning of William Tylsworth in 1506, was alive when Foxe compiled his great work. Agnes Wetherby described the burning to Foxe, she having been present at the martyrdom. Wetherby related to him how sixty persons had to carry faggots for their penance. Foxe shared the faith of Tylsworth and the others who were burned. To understand Foxe it is necessary to consider the way in which Trotsky hates Stalin or Anarchists whose comrades have been martyred under the Soviet regime despise Soviet Communism as the counter-revolution.

John Foxe was born at Boston, in Lincolnshire in 1517. His father died shortly after his birth and his mother re-married. Foxe remained at home until the age of sixteen, when he was entered at Brasenose College, Oxford. In 1538 he took his degree of B.A., and that of M.A. five years later, when he was also elected Fellow of Magdalen College. A few years later Fox was publicly accused of heresy and expelled from the University. His friends and family were afraid to recognise him but he was protected by Sir Thomas Lucy, of Warwickshire, who came forward to befriend him. Foxe was appointed tutor to Lucy's family and married a woman from Coventry. He continued in Lucy's service until his patron's children reached maturity.

A few years before the death of Henry VIII., Foxe came to London. He was without friends or money and used to sit in St. Paul's Church, looking like a spectre. At this time he was almost starved to death. One day an utter stranger sat down beside him and placed a large sum of money in his hands. The stranger told him to be of good courage as he would receive more certain means of subsistence in a few days. Within three days the Duchess of Richmond appointed him tutor to her nephew's children. Her nephew, the Earl of Surrey, was at this time a prisoner in the Tower. Foxe found an asylum at the Earl's house at Reigate, during the last years of Henry VIII.'s reign, the reign of Edward VI., and part of Mary's. Under the Bloody Queen's reign, Gardiner's malice was directed towards him, and one of his pupils, the then Duke of Norfolk, arranged for his escape from England. The Duke of Norfolk provided him with every comfort for his

voyage, and he sailed from Ipswich, with his wife and other refugees whom the Duke had befriended. The party finally reached Basle, in Switzerland, where a great number of other English people had been driven by the Marian persecution. In this city, famous for its printing, Foxe began his work on the martyrs.

This work is admittedly the writing of a partisan. Foxe admired the martyrs for their constancy and their virtue. He knew them to be sincere, well-living, scholarly persons. Whether in what is termed vulgarly and cantingly, humble circumstances or otherwise, they were essentially clean-living men and women, given to thought and a love of truth. They were barbarously burned for their integrity. Foxe's record has many faults but it is an imperishable document for the guide and assistance of every student of human progress.

On Elizabeth's accession, Foxe returned to England and was invited to live at the Manor, Christ Church, London, by the Duke of Norfolk. He remained there until the Duke's death when he inherited a pension from his benefactor. Elizabeth now made him prebendary of Shipton in the Cathedral of Salisbury, on the advice of Cecil, the Marquis of Salisbury. Here he set himself to enlarge his work on the martyrs. The result was the powerful and comprehensive history in biographical form of the great period of the English Renaissance and Reformation.

When we see people reading the Bible at street corners, and propounding nonsensical doctrine or developing banal comments on the Scriptures, we forget the great history of the Bible. This book is bound up with the struggle for freedom of thought and speech, and many lawyers and judges and ermined fools of later times only make mock of history when they treat the Bible as a work that dare not be subjected to the fullest freedom on inquiry. It is the great crime of Protestant society that it has declined the great Scriptures of freedom in the idolatrous symbol of oppression. The virtue of the Bible has been undermined by the worthless worship of the Church. This fact does not destroy the Bible's historical value nor deny the part it played in the period when the struggle of the peasants and the battle for free speech was commenced in fourteenth century England. Foxe's Martyrs were not the pioneers of cant and street corner Bible thumpers or modern bishops or archbishops. They were pioneers of free thought and the people's struggle. They were our direct ancestors in the cause of freedom and we are their legitimate offspring in the line of direct descent. Their immediate descendant was Jerrard Winstanley, the Digger, who from 1649 to 1652 endeavoured to establish an industrial republic in England, and worked out an entire system of social relationship based on the Bible and anticipated the twentieth century concept of a Soviet Republic.

Foxe was a Trinitarian and not too friendly towards the Unitarians. He was only partly emancipated from the fallacies of the Pagan theologies that denied and corrupted the original Christian teaching. He was indeed a vigorous sectarian but it is to his lasting credit that he was not so sectarian that he believed in the burning of Unitarians. In 1575, Foxe protested against the martyrdom at Smithfield of two Dutch Unitarians. He protested boldly and emphatically. But he listed no Unitarians in his work on the martyrs. Twelve years after this protest, Foxe died on the 18th of April, 1587. He had spent the interval musing on the sufferings of the Protestant Trinitarian martyrs.

I.—THE MARTYRS AND THE SIX ARTICLES.

The story that Foxe had to tell would make better reading if he had not repeated himself so much. In this respect, his record resembles folk-lore. Instead of describing the manner in which a bishop was degraded, step by step into a secular layman, or a priest, whose degradation took up so much less time because of his lower dignity, once and for all, Foxe repeats the description in every instance, with the result that the reader is bored rather than impressed. If he had been actually writing the biography of each martyr for separate publication, his method might have been correct. In a comprehensive picture, it was a mistake.

Similarly, with reference to the statements made by the martyrs. Foxe has the martyrs repeating each other, saying pages of the same stuff over and over again. This certainly demonstrates the constancy of each martyr. But it has the unfortunate effect of parading them before us as so many parrots. So far as the individual victim is concerned his volubility may have served an excellent propaganda purpose. But when the records are collected into one story, the reader or student wants to know what each martyr said that was peculiar to himself, and not that stated which was common to all. The individual man and woman protesting declaims the idea. When a thousand persons have declaimed the same idea in the same terms exactly, the historian preserves the one statement and attaches the names of the martyrs to it. Life would be intolerable and our understanding barren did the historian do otherwise.

The period covered by Foxe is 1324 to 1558. The martyrdoms begin actually with the burning of Sir William Sautre in 1401. Foxe paid no attention to the burning of Joan Bocher in 1550, and of Van Parr in 1551. He makes reference to the martyrs on the Continent, but in no case does he mention Unitarian martyrs there either. Consequently, many of the names that he omits from his

work are of greater scholastic worth than those included in his list. The characters, however, were not more courageous.

Foxe's martyrs are brilliant and courageous in their magnificent iconoclasm. Their positive doctrine was a mass of superstition and absurdity. Their real contribution to progress was a grand denial, one magnificent assertion of sanity. They are remembered for that denial. Their superstitions have been destroyed by later iconoclasts.

The Trinitarian martyrs denied the gross superstition of the Real Presence. It meant nothing to them that that denial undermined the entire edifice of Trinitarian superstition. Sometimes with subtlety, playing with their priestly persecutors in the very hour of their martyrdom; at other times crudely and rudely and with no adroitness of address; but always boldly and firmly the men and women whom Foxe has canonised denied the gross and intolerable superstition of the Real Presence.

The doctrine of the Real Presence is that the very true presence of Christ's body and blood, in substance, is in the sacrament of the altar or Lord's Supper, after the bread and wine are consecrated by the priest. Transubstantiation then occurs. This doctrine was defined in the Statute of *The Six Articles,* nicknamed the Bloody Bill, or the *Whip with the Six Strings* enacted in 1539; amended in 1544; repealed 1547; and re-enacted 1554.

The martyrs boldly avowed that the bread remained bread, and that the wine was still wine. Common sense tells us they were right and their persecutors wrong.

It is strange to reflect that Parliament passed the infamous Statute of the Six Articles in the very same year as the monasteries were suppressed and the Bibles placed in the Churches for public reading. This concession developed the martyrdoms, because students discovered that the Bible did not support the doctrine of the Real Presence or the teachings of the Church. By law, the people were told to read the Bible publicly and they were also told that whoso spoke and wrote against the Church — actually, the pagan corrupted teachings of Council theology—lost their property for the first offence and their lives for a second. If they had no property they lost their lives the first time. Thomas Cromwell had a version of the Bible known as Coverdale's Bible placed in every Church in England, for all the people to read. Before this time, the common people were unable or forbidden to read the so-called sacred book. Further than this, Henry VIII. would not go.

Apart from imposing belief in the Real Presence, the Statute of the Six Articles insisted on: —

1. The celibacy of the clergy (whereby Archbishop Cranmer was obliged to put away his wife and deny his marriage).
2. Auricular Confession.

The penalty appointed for a breach of the Statute was the same as that for treason and felony, so that no recantation would serve. When this law was amended in 1544, it was decreed that such offenders as were convicted for the first time should recant and renounce their opinions, and if the party refused to recant in such form as should be laid by his ordinary, he should abjure and bear a faggot, which if he refused to do so, or else if being abjured, he offended a third time, then he was to sustain punishment according to the law. All books of the Old or New Testament bearing the name of William Tindal were prohibited. Also, any containing prologues, annotations, or comments. Likewise, all songs, plays, interludes in English, dealing with religion and containing thoughts contrary to the Six Articles. It was also provided that all women, artificers, apprentices, journeymen, serving-men, yeomen, husbandmen and labourers were prohibited to have in their possession or to read the Bible, either the Old or the New Testaments. Noblemen, gentlemen and gentlewomen were permitted to read and peruse both the Old and New Testaments, provided they did it quietly, without any injury to society or the Church in discussing or expounding the contents. The purpose of this clause was to overcome the enthusiastic social consequence of Coverdale's Bible being chained to a pillar or desk in every Church for all to read. Parties were made up to visit the Churches in order to read the Bible, and common folk heard it read for the first time by one of their number with tears in their eyes.

Whereas the 1539 Act did not allow the offender or defender to bring in witnesses for the defence, the Amended Act permitted the accused to bring as many, or more witnesses, to establish his innocence as were produced against him, with a view to proving his guilt. This clause did not benefit the true Protestant at all, but it did serve to make an end to the spy. It did not save a man from being informed against falsely if he were too active in his Protestantism, but it compelled the spy to tread more warily than he had done previously. Three years later (1547), Parliament repealed the Six Articles and the Lord Protector Somerset sanctioned the sweeping of all pictures and images of the saints out of the Churches. Nevertheless, Joan Bocher and Van Parr were burned for heresy by the friends of the martyrs who had suffered under the Six Articles. Foxe approved of the sweeping reforms of Somerset and out of appreciation of the new conditions hesitated at mentioning the fate of Bocher and Van Parr.

In 1554, Mary the First, with the consent of Parliament, restored the Papal Supremacy. The 1401 Act, *De Heretico Comburendo*, was revived, and all those who refused to obey the Pope were condemned to death at the stake. The fires at Smithfield never went out during Mary's reign. From 1554 to 1558, men and

women, old and young, were burned at the rate of ten a month for refusing to recognise popery. Every death won hundreds to the cause of the victims; and a letter to Bishop Bonner contained the words: "You have lost the hearts of twenty thousands that were rank Papists, within the last twelve months."

In one day, thirteen people, two of them women, were burned at Stratford-le-Bow; and the citizens of London saw seventy-three men from Colchester tied all to one rope, dragged through the streets to the fatal fires of Smithfield.

II.—THE HISTORIC SETTING.

The fact that the Marian persecution, which did not begin but rather ended the religious martyrdom in England, made theology the all-important issue has obscured understanding of the social setting that preceded her reign. Although people were burned for opposing the Church or entertaining heterodox views of God, there was the daily earthly routine to be pursued by every one that was essentially real. It is necessary that the student of Protestantism and the reader of Foxe should have some knowledge of the political and economic setting of the time.

1341.—*The King's Struggle with Parliament.* Edward III. (1327-1377) had his right to impose taxes challenged by Parliament. From this time onwards, the two Houses of Parliament sat regularly and in separate chambers. The Commons, composed of the knights of the shire, who were country gentlemen, and the city members gradually drew to themselves the right of inquiry into public abuses and of impeaching Counsellors.

1348-49.—*The Black Death.* This terrible plague, due to the dirt and want of drainage, led to the Statute of Labourers, which enacted that no labourer, male or female, should ask for a larger wage than he or she received before this scourge had depleted the ranks of the labourers, and so increased the value of labour power by the lessening of the supply and raising the demand. The Statute also provided that no labourer must leave the parish in which he or she lived. It is easy to see that there was no religious nonsense and no humanitarian sentiment moving the people who placed such legislation on the Statute Book. Quite frankly, the Act put property before humanity and proclaimed the reality of the class struggle. The Catholic Church, that burned heretics so freely, with equal enthusiasm upheld this Statute. This economic fact assisted the spread of Protestantism, which, in opposing the doctrines of the Church, found itself compelled to resist also the social system that the Church maintained.

1381.—*The Peasants' Rebellion.* The immediate cause of this revolt was the imposition of a poll tax (1377). The influence of the Lollards had prepared the way for the outbreak. John Wycliffe emancipated largely the minds of the labouring masses from the authority of Church and King. His "poor priest" went far beyond his teaching, and not content with preaching against the sinfulness and excessive wealth of the clergy, urged that all wealth should be equally divided among all, and that all men were free and equal. This doctrine spread like wildfire and has never since been suppressed by the ruling-class in England. John Ball, a Kentish priest, and one of Wycliffe's followers, went about the country preaching from the text:

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?"

John Ball was termed by the ruling-class the "mad priest."

A spark was set to the smouldering fires of discontent by Walter, a tiler of Maidstone, known locally, and since to history, as Wat Tyler. A royal tax collector had insulted Tyler's daughter and Wat killed him with one blow of his hammer. All Kent rose in arms. Wat Tyler, with an army of Kentishmen, and Jack Straw, at the head of the men of Essex, marched to London, while the commons of England were ablaze from one end of the country to another. The Southern peasants killed every lawyer they met, because, as they said, the lawyers have been busy undoing the work of emancipation that had been in progress before the Black Death. The parish records were burned. Breaking into the parks of the gentry, the peasants slew the deer and emptied the fishponds. When the insurgents reached London, the poorer artisans seized the gates of the city and threw them open to them. The Kentishmen seized the Savoy Palace of John of Gaunt, which lay in the Strand, beside the city wall. They destroyed the houses of the wealthy and arrested and executed the Archbishop of Canterbury; but they abstained from plunder and called themselves Seekers of Truth and Justice, not Thieves nor Robbers.

Richard the Second, then only fifteen years of age, met the Essex men at Mile-end in the East End of London. He declared himself their leader and promised to redress their grievances. The next day he met Wat Tyler at Smithfield. Whilst the king was conversing with Tyler, the latter was attacked treacherously and stabbed to death by Walworth, Lord Mayor of London. Walworth was assisted in his treachery by two squires. At this time, Smithfield was one of the great meeting-places and play-grounds of London.

The king never redeemed his promises. He gathered a large army to suppress the peasants. His pardon to them was annulled, and hundreds of rebels were cruelly executed (1381), for maintain-

ing their rights as men. The Peasants' Rebellion, as it is known, succeeded, despite the king's treachery, in destroying villeinage and struck a death-blow at feudalism. It raised the status and the self-respect of the serfs. John Ball, Wat Tyler and Jack Straw did not live in vain.

John Ball was born about 1338. He witnessed the Black Death when a scholar at St. Mary's, York. Ordained in 1356, he became a parochial chaplain. Years before Wycliffe raised his voice at Oxford, "the mad priest" began to prophecy against the evils of his time. John Richard Green states that, in the preaching of John Ball, England first listened to the knell of feudalism and a declaration of the rights of man.

For twenty years, Ball preached the Lollardy of a more direct and popular source than that of Wycliffe. He pioneered open-air propaganda and preached a vigorous class-war, always appealing to the common people, always insisting on the economic issue, and always maintaining that Socialism was the remedy. Ball travelled from place to place. He preached in church yards and in the market places to crowds which were ever increasing in numbers as he incurred the growing displeasure of the authorities. Ball challenged not only society but also the Church and the State. His programme consisted of five planks: —

1. The Marriage of the Priests.
2. A Voluntary Priesthood.
3. The Abolition of Tithes.
4. The Emancipation of the Labourers.
5. The Common Ownership of the Land and the Common Right of Every One to share in the Wealth that came from the Land and from Labour.

John Ball was accused by the authorities of manifest errors and of stirring up social strife, i.e., Class War. He was rebuked by Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury. He was excommunicated whilst working in his diocese, by the Bishop of Norwich. He maintained a Labourers' Headquarters at Essex, from where he extended his work throughout the country. He inspired the riots of 1375-1377, that were occasioned by the terrible poverty of the people. In the early part of 1381, he began issuing letters declaring that the time had come for action. In April, 1381, he was imprisoned first in Maidstone Jail and then in the Archbishop's Palace at Canterbury. He was released by Wat Tyler, when the men of Kent stormed the Palace and tried and executed the Archbishop. He joined in the march on London, June 11-13. After the betrayal and assassination of Wat Tyler, Ball denounced the king and made an unsuccessful attempt to rouse the peasants to further revolt. Finally, he was seized at Coventry, hanged, drawn and quartered. His

execution as a social rebel saved him from being burned at the stake as a heretic.

1453.—*The Renaissance or New Learning.* In 1453, the Turks captured Constantinople, and the great scholars, the Greeks, who lived there, fled from the victorious Moslems. They distributed their learning and their love of it all over Europe; scholarship and education formerly confined to churchmen, driven into exile, penetrated all classes. Love of the new learning was introduced into England by John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, who flourished 1466-1519; Erasmus, 1466-1536, the famous Dutchman, who taught Greek in Cambridge University and annoyed Lord Chancellor More with his satiric humour; and Sir Thomas More, the Lord Chancellor, 1480-1535, the author of *Utopia,* secretly a theist but publicly a papist, persecutor of Protestants and himself a martyr for conscience.

John Colet was born in London in 1466, the eldest son of Sir Henry Colet, twice Lord Mayor of London who had twenty-one other children. Colet studied philosophy and logic, and took his degree in arts at Magadalen College, Oxford, in 1483-1490. He was a keen student of Plato, Plotinus and Cicero. After further studies in Italy and Paris Colet returned to Oxford, and defied the Church by refusing to read the works of Scotus and Thomas Aquinas publicly. He insisted on reading and lecturing from the Epistles of St. Paul.

Colet became Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, and used his position to oppose the Orders of Monks and Friars. He denounced the barbarous divinity of the school doctors, and attacked the unchaste celibacy of the priests. Erasmus commended Thomas Aquinas in Dean Colet's company. The Dean took issue with the great Dutch author, and denounced Thomas Aquinas as arrogant, presumptuous, and worldy-minded.

Colet denounced the doctrine of apologetic works and denounced written sermons. He declared that there was no living message to the people in sermons that were read, and argued that a genuine preacher must speak spontaneously and directly. Fitz-James, Bishop of London, denounced Colet to William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, for this attitude and also indicted him for attacking images and charity. Warham took the side of Colet. Colet translated the Lord's Prayer into English to the distaste of the Bishop of London. Once more the Archbishop of Canterbury stood by the Dean. William Tindal made great play of the Archbishop's attitude when answering to Thomas More's apology for popery, and declared that the Bishop of London wished to have Colet burned for heresy.

1486-1522.—*The Rise of Exploration. Discovery of America.* Bartholomew Diez, with his fellow Portuguese, led the way to exploring, first along the west coast to Africa, and then, by doubling

the Cape of Good Hope in 1486, pointing the road to India. Six years later the Genoese mariner, Christopher Columbus, crossed the Atlantic, and added a new world to the old, by discovering the West Indies. In 1497, the Venetian, John Cabot, sailing from the English port of Bristol, landed on the coast of Nova Scotia. The next year, the Florentine, Amerigo Vespucci, sailed along the eastern border of South America; and Sebastian Cabot, the son of John Cabot, was threading his way through the icebergs of Labrador, to open up the mystery of the North-West Passage. Finally, the vessel of Ferdinand Magellan was the first to circumnavigate the world (1519-1522). This Portuguese mariner lost his life in the interests of discovery in a petty skirmish in the Phillippines (1521). Vasco de Gama in 1497 had sailed round the Cape of Good Hope and was the first European to reach the shores of India by a sea route.

Immediately this great period of exploration had no effect on the superstitions of the old world. It even carried those superstitions into the new world where they gave birth to intolerable persecution and suffering. Nevertheless, it was impossible for man to make himself master of the earth without destroying the myths and errors of the skies. The growth of reason and the final passing of superstition may be said to be the consequences of this period of physical inquiry and geographical discovery.

1517-1521.—*Henry VIII. and Martin Luther.* The German reformer (1483-1546), had visited Rome, attacked "indulgences," repudiated the Pope's authority, and raised a body of "Protestants," a body of men who protested against the Roman Catholic claim that the priest was the sole mediator between God and man. In some respects Luther attacked mystery in religion. In other respects he perpetuated the vilest superstitions and was far inferior to Erasmus, who was the greatest living man of letters and the greatest scholar in Europe at the time that Luther entered on his campaign. Erasmus at this time was fifty-one and Luther thirty-four. But for Erasmus there is no doubt that Luther would have died at the stake. As it was, he lived to defy the Pope but later to compromise with the papal authority because of his hatred of the peasants of Germany. His opposition to the Anabaptists proceeded from direct property reaction, and opposition to the revolutionary Communism for which the Anabaptists stood. Luther believed in the personal devil, actually saw him in trees outside his house, threw inkwells at him, and described how the devil had destroyed or lost his manuscripts. Strangely enough, although recognising that Christianity proceeded from Judaism, and hating Erasmus for his classical Greek and Latin learning, Luther hated the Jews and published some of the most vile denunciations to which that race has ever been subjected. Modern Nazism has nothing on Luther in

this respect, who urged the most abominable persecution. This does not detract from the fact that he boldly challenged the Pope's authority with a vigour that Erasmus never attempted. In 1521, Henry VIII., who had been intended for the priesthood and had become king from what might be termed the fortuitous concourse of circumstance, wrote a pamphlet in reply to Luther, entitled, *The Defence of the Seven Sacraments*. The Pope was pleased with this defence and conferred upon Henry VIII. the title of *The Defender of the Faith* (Fidei Defensor), which that king, and his successors ever since, have used in opposition to the Popes' authority and as a perpetual challenge to his supremacy. It was ten years later that Henry proclaimed himself the Supreme Head of the Church in England. The following year, he cut off the payment of the Annates or First Fruits to the Papal Treasury. These were the payments that priests or bishops had to make to the Pope on obtaining a new see or living. As a rule, they amounted to the whole of the first year's income.

1533-1534.—*Henry VIII. Excommunicated.* The king replied to the excommunication by sending to the scaffold as traitors all Catholics who challenged his right to overthrow the Pope's authority. He also burned as heretics all Protestants who repudiated Roman Catholic teachings in the Church. Henry took his stand for complete Catholicism without the Pope: for schism as against heresy. All appeals to, or dealings with the Pope were forbidden by Act of Parliament, 1534. The following year Sir Thomas More was martyred.

More succeeded Cardinal Wolsey in 1529 but was compelled to resign the great seal three years later. Henry visited him in his house at Chelsea and they often strolled in the garden together and discussed the new learning. More had no illusions as to Henry's affection and declared: "If my head should win for him a castle in France it should not fail to go."

In 1534 More was imprisoned for refusing to recognise the supremacy of the king over the Church, and on July 6, 1535, remaining as obdurate as the men he had silenced and martyred in his day of power, he was beheaded.

More, in power, set the example in all questions of property or ordinary cases, of an incorruptible judge. He was a persecutor of the worst description and is impeached in Foxe's book on the martyrs. It is very hard to understand More's attitude in this matter because in his writings he privately anticipated a land of pure theism and obviously was not himself a Christian. One can only conclude that his persecution of the Protestants proceeded partly from his theocratic conception of society and his private

antagonism to the secular state. This is a poor explanation but it may have some bearing on the matter.

Sent to the Tower with More was John Fisher, Chancellor of Cambridge University and Bishop of Rochester. He opposed the royal supremacy and denounced the royal divorce. The king deposed him from his bishopric and the Pope replied to his imprisonment by making him a bishop of the Church of Rome and sending him a Cardinal's hat. One of the badges of a Cardinal is a peculiar broad-brimmed hat, which is never worn, but hung up in the Church from which the Cardinal takes his title.

"Yes," said the king when he heard the news, "is he yet so lusty? Well, let the Pope send him a hat; but I will so provide that he will wear it on his shoulders, for head he shall have none to set it on."

Fisher was beheaded in consequence at Tyburn, and his head set up on London Bridge, 1535.

There is no doubt that, first the royal, and subsequently the parliamentary, control of the Church represented progress. One strange result of this secular control of the Church is that the ministers of the state Church have no right to develop their own doctrines and have no right to conscience. More's defence of the papal authority was wrong but his maintenance of the right of conscience was essentially right. In the realm of opinion and of thought, to which category the Church belonged as the actual organiser of thought and opinion, for it should have no other function, there can be no progress unless individual thinking is recognised as a right. Protestantism should mean not the supremacy of the State over the Church and much less the supremacy of the Church over the State. It should spell, however, the supremacy of the Church over itself and above all the sovereignty of mind for the individual preacher. Congregationalism is the real organised expression of Protestantism, for Congregationalism does not or ought not to set up an established standard of opinion.

1540.—*Thomas Cromwell.* This statesman was born in 1485 and became a keen student and admirer of Machiavelli. He entered Wolsey's service in 1514 and remained loyal to the Cardinal till the latter's fall in 1529. He then supported the royal divorce and urged the royal supremacy. He became Foreign Minister, Home Secretary, Vicar General of the Church, Supreme Admiral of the Fleet, Organiser of the Army, and President of the infamous Star Chamber. Henry created him Earl of Essex. He suppressed the monasteries and secured the revenue to the Crown. He ruthlessly crushed the Catholic revolt known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, headed by Robert Aske. Cromwell inspired Henry to go through

the solemn farce of trying Sir Thomas a Becket, who had been dead four hundred years, and finding him guilty as a traitor to his king. This was to justify looting Becket's shrine of it's jewels and costly furnishings. Contrast this attitude of a ruling prince and his statesmen with the disinterested and noble dignity of the peasants in their revolt under Wat Tyler, Jack Straw and John Ball.

Cromwell scattered spies throughout the land, established a complete terror, and reduced bloodshed to a system. He ticked off men's lives with a business-like calm in his notes of the day, just like Stalin must do in modern Russia.

> "Item, the Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading."
>
> "Item, When Master Fisher shall go to his execution, and the other More."

These are two entries to be found in his notebook. Cromwell struck down More, Fisher, Courtney and Pole, to inspire terror into the rest. He aimed to establish an international combination of Protestants through the marriage of Henry to Anne of Cleaves, who was officially a Protestant princess of North Germany, and actually a very coarse and ugly woman. Cromwell deceived the king into marrying her by persuading the monarch that she was a beautiful princess. Immediately after the marriage ceremony Henry divorced her because he could not tolerate her looks. This was on July 10, 1540. Three weeks later Cromwell was sent to the scaffold without being allowed to say a word in his defence.

Seven years after Cromwell's death, the Lord Protector Somerset swept all pictures and images of the saints out of the churches, and Parliament repealed the Statute of the Six Articles. Of course, there was a later set-back under Mary but Protestantism was marching on, and the papal authority was doomed.

This historic background does not present us with a beautiful picture of wisdom or the love of truth. It is a sordid picture of a struggle for power, of men caught in a mess of superstition, of ugly lusts: indeed of everything but thought. The bright aspect of the picture is to be found in the opening up of the new world. When Christians tell us that Christianity has been the source of everything pure in history, they are lying. Christianity begins historically, subsequent to the time of Jesus, not with the rise but with the downfall of the Catholic Church. The Trinitarian Protestantism that pioneered that downfall is not beautiful and it is not Christianity. This Protestantism actually rises as a schism, a struggle for power, and then develops into a heresy. Such development is excellent but it is ugly to the extent that it proceeds from expediency rather than from the inspiration of principle. Unfortunately, the defenders of the Christian faith mark time at the

schism, desire to preserve the pagan superstitions, and maintain that the arrested orthodoxy is what they mean by Christianity. It may be historical Christianity. It may be traditional Christianity. If so, the history should be sorrowed over and the tradition should be trampled underfoot. It certainly does not represent the spiritual regeneration of mankind. Fortunately for mankind, and unfortunately for the Church, there was stirring through this turmoil of struggle and persecution, of conflict between heresy and schism, a real ideal; an ideal for which the Church even to-day has not the courage to stand; an ideal for which the first Christians struggled and were martyred; the ideal of integrity in oneself and concord and brotherhood throughout the world. This is a very simple ideal yet for centuries the Church has obscured it with mystery proceeding from its lust of power, and denied mankind the right of its inheritance.

APPENDIX

JOHN BALL.

H. De B. Gibbins, in his *English Social Reformers,* describes at some length the peasants' revolt, and the formidable gatherings, in the country districts, of villeins and "fugitive serfs." De Gibbins classes John Ball with the Communist section of the Lollards. Ball, starting his agitation in 1360, which is before Wickliff organised his priests. A prophet in the Hebrew style, well-known all over the South of England, he was, at first, a Secular, and then a wandering priest.

Froissart has left us a picture of John Ball's activities.

"This priest used oftentimes, on the Sundays, after mass, when the people were going out of the minster, to go into the cloister and preach, and make the people to assemble about him, and would say this: —'Ah! ye good people, the matters goeth not well to pass in England, nor shall not do till everything be common, and that there be no villeins nor gentlemen, but that we may be all united together, and that the lords be no greater masters than we be. What have we deserved? or why should we be kept thus in servage? We be all come from one father and one mother—Adam and Eve—whereby can they say or show that they be greater lords than we be, saving that they cause us to labour to bring forth what they consume? They are clothed in velvet and furs; we are dressed in poor clothes. They have their wines, spices, and good bread, and we have oatcake and straw, and water to drink. They dwell in fair houses, and we have the pain and the toil, rain and winds in the fields. By the produce of our labour they keep and maintain their estates. We be called their bondmen, and without we readily do their will we be beaten; and we have no

sovereign to whom we may complain; nor that will hear us, nor do us right. Let us go to the King; he is young; and show him what slavery we be in, and show him how we will have it otherwise, or else we will provide us of some remedy; and if we go together, all manner of people that be now in any bondage will follow us to the intent to be made free. And when the King seeth us, we shall have some remedy either by fairness or otherwise.'

"Thus John Ball said on Sundays when the people issued out of village churches. Wherefore many of the common people loved him, and such as intended to no goodness said how he said truth."

The nineteenth-century priest, who became the historian of the common people, J. R. Green, commented on this speech recorded by Froissart:—

"It was the tyranny of property that then, as ever, raised the defiance of Socialism."

John Ball must have repented of his faith in the King.

Some of the messages that Ball sent to his secret societies have been preserved and make strange reading.

"John Ball greeteth you well all, and doth you to understand that he hath rungen your bell. Now right and might, will and skill. Now God haste you in everything. Time it is that Our Lady help you with Jesus her Son, and the Son with the Father, to make in the name of the Holy Trinity a good end to what has been begun. Amen, amen, for charity amen."

This is using the Trinity to promote social insurrection. Ball rallied superstition to the aid of the oppressed.

Another message reads:—

"John Ball, priest of St. Mary's, greets well all manner of men, and bids them in the name of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to stand together manfully in truth. Maintain the truth, and the truth will maintain you.

"Now reigneth pride in price,
And covetise is holden wise,
And lechery withouten shame,
And gluttony withouten blame,
Envy reigneth with treason
And sloth is take in great season.

"God give aid, for now is the time. Amen."

A third message apparently urged unity and warned against being diverted from the main struggle by side issues. It reads:—

"John Schepe, some time St. Mary's priest of York, and now of Colchester, greeteth well John nameless, and John the Miller, and John the Carter, and biddeth them that they beware of guile in borough, and stand together in God's name, and biddeth Piers the Plowman go to his work, and chastise well Hobbe the robber, and take with you John Trueman, and all his fellows, and no more, and look that you shape you to one head and no more."

Author's Appeal

TO EDITORS, READERS AND LIBRARIANS.

[It was the author's intention to collect his pamphlets and publish them in one volume. The war may make this impossible. But each pamphlet in **The Word Library** will be sent round as suggested. So the appeal stands, applied to the entire series. Collection in one volume is postponed.]

This collection of essays will be sent to a number of papers in all parts of the world for review. It will be sent specially to the press in Britain, America, the American Colonies, and the British Dominions. Editors are asked, as a favour, to send copies of their papers containing review notices to the author.

The volume will be sent, also, to the chief public libraries in Britain and the United States. It will be sent post free to any public library in the world on the receipt of an application from the librarian. Readers are reminded that the first editions of each of the pamphlets, revised and collected in this volume, can be consulted in the British Museum. Some of them are to be found in the Public Library at New York.

Readers are asked to purchase several copies of the work and to circulate the copies among their friends. Order small quantities at reduced rates. The struggle for bread and freedom, for culture and liberty as well as security, must be revived and rewaged. If the reader belongs to some organisation that conducts meetings, he should arrange for the author to visit his town, and to be afforded a free platform from which to define his position. The author may be wrong on a thousand points, but the revival of thought and discussion must be right. The Glasgow Clarion Society did this in 1912. Why not your organisation to-day?

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